

Special Thanks to Town Departments for Storm Management

The past few weeks our Town Departments had to navigate through two major weather events. The wind storm with almost tornado wind speeds caused wide spread power outages across several counties in Western New York. Even in Clarence, the wind seemed to hop scotch through Town leaving large sections without power. The Town Emergency Mangers Dave Bissonette and Dave Baumler worked with NYSEG for almost a week. They helped guide the power crews, of which most were out-of-town crews, to the critical areas where roads were closed or people with special needs were without power.

The Emergency Mangers also worked with Fire Inspector Dave Metzger in assisting our residents when requests were made for assistance. Welfare checks were made throughout the ordeal, including helping residents with the proper use of generators and carbon monoxide testing. Senior Citizens are always the most affected during weather events, so when requests for assistance were made to the Town Hall their critical needs were addressed.

The Clarence Senior Center shelter was placed on standby as a possible warming center and a place for overnight stays. Thank you to Program Coordinator Shannon White for her help working with the Center Volunteers at the shelter.

The Fire Departments were working with the Emergency Coordinators with power outage updates in their particular districts. Clarence Center Chief Ben Hodge was a great assistance getting Goodrich Road back open in a timely manner and assisting many elderly residents' welfare needs. Chief Jeff Schlabach and the Clarence Fire Company dealt with multiple down, actively energized, burning power lines that were not addressed by NYSEG for days.

After participating in many conference calls with NYSEG and 40 other Towns and Villages the inability to get some neighborhoods like Fairlane Drive back on line sooner was frustrating. The Clarence Emergency Mangers will be meeting on the County level in a few weeks to review the event for operation improvements in the future.

New York Alert, controlled by the County, was not available to Clarence so we could not get messages out in a timely manner. The Town is looking at other options to get information back to its residents during major events.

The Town of Clarence website home page has information links which includes NYSEG power outage information, as well as links to various information sources when there is an emergency. www.clarence.ny.us

Many thanks to our Highway Department, led by James Dussing. They were extremely busy during the wind storm, which was then shortly followed by almost two feet of snow on our roads. The Highway Department office staff answered calls from residents and law enforcement for removal of trees and limbs that were not energized, off our roads and from our neighborhoods. The Highway Department also assisted the Emergency Mangers in closing roads that had energized lines on them. Chuck McNiff, our Deputy Highway Superintendent, worked tirelessly as well. I would also like to thank Karen Jurek for managing the welfare calls, among many other tasks above and beyond her duties this past week.